

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

March 28, 2023

6:30pm

PRESENT: Alderpersons Webb, Carroll, Garza, Hegy

ALSO PRESENT: City Administrator Volkert, City Engineer John Griffin

Call to Order – Alderperson Webb called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. in the Common Council Chambers of Hartford City Hall, 109 North Main Street.

Roll Call – All members of the Committee were present.

Public Comment Period – No public comment.

Discussion regarding the 2022 Stormwater Permit Report to WDNR:

City Engineer John Griffin explained that the city is required to submit an annual report under the General Permit. This permit has been renewed for continued coverage since 2006. There are new requirements for the updated permit which include greater public participation, electronic reporting and more clear and specific requirements with measurable goals for the various aspects of the permit. He then went on to explain what the city has done in regard to the different parts of the report. The police department has already helped with public education and outreach by creating a public notice for residences where grass or yard waste was blown into or left in the roadway. There has also been a focus on taking advantage of any opportunity to speak with residents and the community about what needs to be done when a repair or remedy is necessary. The next item in the report was illicit discharge detection and elimination. This is done to keep sediment out of ponds to help keep maintenance costs down. The next item was construction site pollutant control. This is mainly residential development, but there are also a few commercial sites. The report includes a listing of items that were completed by the Building Inspection Department. Salt usage was next in the report, which is part of the pollution prevention section. Salt usage was much higher in 2022 than 2021. A Public Works Yard Storm Pollution Prevention Plan is in place with quarterly site inspections being performed. The next item was storm water quality management which deals with maintaining levels of total suspended solids and total phosphorus. This includes evaluating best management practices to achieve those levels. This item would also cover a new wet pond that would be installed on Wacker Drive. There are also two wet ponds planned in the Dodge Industrial Park. There are some more moving parts involved with those ponds, but they are in the plans. The main focus is the financing of these projects, with hopes to possibly reduce the amount the city needs to borrow. Mr. Griffin then mentioned that there are grant programs available through the DNR that would provide a good sum toward these pond projects. He asked the committee for feedback as to whether or not those grants should be pursued. Mr. Volkert then mentioned that the possibility of creating a new utility needs to follow two requirements: one, is that the utility would benefit all residents of the municipality, and two, that the cost for maintaining the utility is growing faster than the costs for the majority of other services. Because of the requirements of the EPA and the DNR for the MS-4 permit, stormwater costs are growing faster than the average for other services. This change would allow the city to take cost of stormwater cost off of the levy and move it to a new utility charge for residents. However, this charge would now go to those entities that were not previously charged for it in taxes; non-profit organizations, churches, schools, etc.

Aldersperson Hegy commented that if the cost for stormwater goes up greatly, the taxes would also have to go up accordingly, and the state doesn't allow for that increase. Moving the cost to a utility would be the only way to accomplish this.

Aldersperson Webb commented that it only seems fair that whoever is benefitting from this should share in the cost, and this would spread the cost evenly.

Aldersperson Hegy asked if there was a way to utilize the water treatment plant's ability to reduce phosphorus in stormwater. Mr. Griffin explained that solution has been looked at but not pursued because the testing that is used at the treatment plant is at the limit of detection. Any change could fluctuate that number and may risk the treatment plant not being in compliance with their requirements, which is a much larger issue.

Adjournment – Motion by Aldersperson Carroll, seconded by Aldersperson Hegy for adjournment at 6:49 p.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Lori Hetzel, City Clerk

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Compiled by Samantha Walters, Deputy Clerk